



# Solid Waste Management Program Facts

Solid Waste Management Program fact sheet

11/2004

The Department of Natural Resources' Solid Waste Management Program works to help all Missourians better manage their solid wastes to protect and enhance the public health and environment. Through the cooperative efforts of citizens, businesses, industry and government, Missouri continues to increase material reuse and recycling from sources of solid waste. Reducing the amount of solid wastes generated remains one of the program's primary goals.

Solid waste includes residential garbage, infectious medical waste, construction and demolition waste, and non-hazardous industrial and commercial wastes. To fund these efforts, the Legislature established the Solid Waste Management Fund in 1990. This fund is based on a small fee paid for each ton of waste disposed of in Missouri landfills or sent out of state through a permitted transfer station. Recently, the department lost general revenue that provided 59 percent of the program's solid waste budget. Without full funding the department could lose federal authorization to implement federal solid waste law.

In 2004, Missouri Legislators passed Senate Bill 1040. This bill provides a full program budget using solid waste tonnage fees until Aug. 28, 2005 to enable the state to continue implementing solid waste management efforts. The bill temporarily revises the allocation of the tonnage fee without raising the fee, and provides revenue to make up for general revenue lost during the state's budget shortfall. The bill also created a joint committee appointed by the Speaker of the House and President Pro Tem of the Senate to study and recommend distribution of the Solid Waste Fund for the department's solid waste management activities, grants and operations of the state's 20 Solid Waste Management Districts. This interim committee will recommend a distribution of the fund to the Governor and the General Assembly by Dec. 31, 2004.

The department encourages solid waste management within the Integrated Waste Management Hierarchy to minimize disposal in landfills. These alternatives are waste reduction, reuse, recycling, composting and incineration with energy recovery and finally, landfilling. The total amount of waste disposed of by Missouri in 2003 averaged 1.09 tons per person. By focusing on alternatives to disposal, Missourians have been able to divert 45 percent of the total solid waste from landfills.

For the waste that is not recycled, disposal must be properly done. The siting of landfills and transfer stations has become increasingly difficult and controversial. Each of us generates a ton of trash per year but few people want a landfill or transfer station nearby. As a consequence, many localities have zoned landfills and transfer stations beyond their borders. The Solid Waste Management Program reviews permits for solid waste facilities. The department ensures that the facilities are properly designed, constructed and operated to protect the environment. State law requires early public participation in the landfill permit process. Public input on the transfer station permit process can also be requested.

Improper processing or disposal of solid waste can cause health and environmental problems such as groundwater and surface water pollution, air pollution and the transmission of disease. Illegal dumping and other violations of the solid waste law make enforcement necessary to

PUB002153



protect the environment and to provide a level playing field to the waste disposal industry. To enlist the help of local law enforcement agencies, the program conducted Local Environmental Enforcement Program workshops across Missouri and works closely with local governments to catch illegal dumpers by using hidden cameras to collect hard evidence for local prosecutors.

Disposal facilities must meet stringent requirements for their design, operation and maintenance. Once permitted, the department follows the Solid Waste Law when providing engineering oversight, conducting inspections and enforcement for Missouri's 23 Municipal Solid Waste landfills, 10 utility, special waste and construction and demolition waste landfills and 53 transfer stations. Staff also provides environmental monitoring for closed and inactive landfills.

There are hundreds of old, abandoned landfills scattered across Missouri. These still pose a risk to human health and the environment due to uncontrolled gas migration and groundwater contamination since these are often abandoned and there is no responsible party to maintain or repair these sites. A cleanup fund is necessary to address this problem.

Much of our waste stream is still making its way into Missouri's landfills and this poses several challenges. Increasing disposal of consumer electronic waste, such as televisions, computers, VCR and DVD players, cellphones and games continue to provide recycling challenges.

Whole waste tires, while banned from Missouri landfills, are also a part of the solid waste stream. The state's 50-cent-per-tire waste tire fee played a significant role in cleaning up waste tires and finding new uses for them. Since 1994, more than 13 million tires have been cleaned up in Missouri using this fee. The department established several successful partnerships and reimbursed city and county nonprofit organizations for proper disposal of illegal waste tires collected during neighborhood and community cleanups.

When waste tires are not managed properly they pose serious threats to human health and the environment. When waste tires are recycled they can provide several beneficial uses including fuel for power plants; playground and running tracks surfaces; and other recycled rubber products. In the last 10 years, the department awarded 265 grants totaling more than \$1.4 million to schools, non-profit day cares, parks and other non-profit organizations to purchase these products. These grants have reused thousands of old tires. Unfortunately, this fee expired Jan. 1, 2004. The department estimates as many as 3.8 million illegal waste tires remain in small sites scattered across Missouri. Without the fee this number is expected to increase.

Ensuring proper solid waste disposal practices is just one challenge. The program also provides statewide planning and policy development. Information on solid waste management trends and advice on waste reduction, reuse, recycling or composting waste is disseminated to the public. With proper waste management we can save energy, raw materials and landfill space. The department provides grants and assistance to businesses, local governments, individuals and nonprofit groups. The department and the 20 Solid Waste Management Districts have awarded more than 560 grants in the past 11 years totaling more than \$59 million. Since 1993, the department's Environmental Improvement and Energy Resources Authority's Market Development Program has awarded more than \$6.3 million to 121 Missouri entities creating hundreds of jobs for Missourians.

### **For more information**

Missouri Department of Natural Resources

Solid Waste Management Program

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